

## Book Review - Profiles

D. Caselli, *Esperti. Come studiarli e perché*, Bologna: il Mulino, 2020, pp. 200, ISBN 9788815286055.

In many areas of daily life, the relationship between “experts”, the political-administrative world and civil society is on the agenda. We continually witness situations in which a government of technicians indicates the recipe for combining economic growth and social cohesion, a climatologist affirms a new truth about global warming or a virologist draws up a decalogue to avoid contagions: the volume takes in consideration the social, contradictory and conflicting nature of specific knowledge and its use when “experts” come into play. The author focuses on the power of “experts”, on the technical categories they use and how they act on representations and social organizations.

C. Wouters, M. Dunning (eds.), *Civilisation and Informalisation Connecting Long-Term Social and Psychic Processes*, Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019, pp. 390, ISBN 9783030007973.

Over the last century and a half, manners and formalities in the West have become less status-ridden, stiff and rigid. Debates around Norbert Elias’ theory of civilising processes gave rise to questions of a change in direction of these patterns. The concept of informalisation, which describes these transformations, was first used to analyse the tumultuous changes of the 1960s and 1970s. This increasing informality, leniency and flexibility, comes hand-in-hand with a growing demand on individuals to self-regulate their emotions. This book stimulates debate around the changes in the standards of manners and emotion regulation, and will generate new avenues of enquiry that focus on issues involving informalisation.

F. Gallino, *Tocqueville, il carcere, la democrazia*, Bologna: il Mulino, 2020, pp. 264, ISBN 9788815287465.

The author retraces the journey the young Alexis de Tocqueville had between the United States and Canada between 1831 and 1832, an experience from which “Democracy in America” would later arise. This journey was due to an assignment to conduct ministerial research on the new US penitentiaries. At that time, innovative detention methods were being tested in the United States aimed at curbing recidivism rates and based on the combination of isolation, silence and forced labor. Tocqueville visited prisons, interviewed directors, detainees, doctors and wardens, studied registers and regulations, finally developing a prison theory: the author traces the Tocqueville’s thought with the intention of involving a wider audience and showing its topicality.

L. Bovone, C. Lunghi, *Italia creativa. Condivisione, sostenibilità, innovazione*, pp. 192, Roma: Donzelli, 2020, ISBN 9788855220132.

Since 2008 the generalized situation of economic and financial recession has produced significant effects on the daily life of Italians. Effective strategies to cope with the crisis have emerged such as solidarity purchasing groups, agricultural markets, peer-to-peer rents, but also sharing practices such as means of transport or holiday homes, and forms of self-production of different types, from objects to furnishings, to clothes. Today we hear more and more about cohousing, coworking and swap parties: these are very common practices even in the past in times of strong economic recession. The authors present the results of research that has explored the daily strategies with which individuals and groups pursue satisfactory levels of well-being and quality of life, combining “ancient” practices with new digital and technological tools. These practices are based on a more conscious and sustainable use of resources and spaces, as well as allowing to experiment with new forms of civil participation.

F. Stuart, *Ballads of the bullet. Gangs, drill music and the power of online infamy*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2020, pp. 288, ISBN 9780691194431.

Amid increasing hardship and limited employment options, poor urban youth are developing creative online strategies to make ends meet. Using such social media platforms as YouTube, Twitter, and Instagram, they're capitalizing on the public's fascination with the ghetto and gang violence. But with what consequences? *Ballad of the Bullet* follows the Corner Boys, a group of thirty or so young men on Chicago's South Side who have hitched their dreams of success to the creation of "drill music". Drillers disseminate this competitive genre of hyperviolent, hyperlocal, DIY-style gangsta rap digitally, hoping to amass millions of clicks, views, and followers – and a ticket out of poverty. The author – drawing on extensive fieldwork and countless interviews compiled from daily, close interactions with the Corner Boys, as well as time spent with their families, friends, music producers, and followers – sheds light on how in this perverse system of benefits, where online popularity can convert into offline rewards, the risks can be too great.